



» True/false game

Ask your child to respond to your statements with “true” or “false.” Start with broad statements (“I think you played with someone at recess today”), refine the details (“I think it was a girl from your classroom”), and end with specific reflections (“You hope to play again with her tomorrow, but maybe you’ll play a different game”). You’ll be surprised at how often your child will offer more information when you guess incorrectly!

» Opposites

Have your child pick a set of opposites to answer. Then, answer a set yourself. Choose from the following:

- Best/worst part of the day
- Most surprising/completely expected event
- Memorable/forgettable conversation
- Most interesting/boring classroom moment

» Two truths and a wish

Ask your child to tell you two true things that happened during the day and one thing she was hoping would have happened. All three should be told as if they happened that day. Try to guess your child’s wish!

More than “How was your day?”

That age-old question usually ends one way: “Fine.” Use these tips to learn more about your child’s day at school:

- » **Remember to follow up** on situations your child has talked about earlier—what she was dreading about the school day or what she was looking forward to.
- » **Ask specific questions.** “What activity did you do in gym class?” is less overwhelming than “Tell me about your day.”
- » **Try making comments instead of asking questions.** Questions can sometimes raise defenses, while comments serve as an invitation.
- » **Give verbal cues** that you’re listening and engaged. This will help your child talk more about a topic. →

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» Complete this . . .

For the reluctant talker, ask him to fill in the blank for several statements. Start simple, mix in a few silly ones, and slip in a follow-up question once you've gotten the conversation going. Examples:

- "Today during math class, I almost _____."
- "The funniest comment from a classmate came from _____."
- "Today, I was hoping that _____."
- "Tomorrow, I probably should _____."

» Connect with activity

For many kids (especially boys), a great way to ignite conversation is to go straight to an activity your child enjoys. Give him the space to volunteer conversation about his day.

» **Listen as kids talk with one another.** Create opportunities by offering to drive or hosting study sessions.

» **For older kids, don't be quick to offer solutions to problems.** Sometimes, kids just need to think out loud.

» **Ask your child to try to stump you** on something he learned that day.

» **Talk about nonschool topics first.** Let your kids know what they missed during the day, or what's happening on the homefront. When you model openness, your kids are more likely to follow suit.

» **Don't force the conversation.** Some kids just need to decompress after school. Be available later when they are willing to talk.

